



# Building Intervention Team and/or Building At-Risk Team

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Students who appear likely to fail because of economic, social, and/or academic problems are considered “at risk” students. Students considered “at risk” may be identified by teachers, counselors, administrators, parents, support staff, and the students themselves. Under Wyoming Department of Education Rules and Regulations Chapter 6 Accreditation, each school must have systematic policies and procedures to identify at-risk students and to intervene when necessary to help the student achieve academically and to prevent at-risk behaviors. Some schools have both a Building Intervention Team (BIT) and a Building At-Risk Team (BART); other schools have only one or the other. The BIT and the BART are school-based, problem-solving teams of educators who are knowledgeable about intervention methods and instruction practices for students in the grades in their building. This team is also familiar with the teachers and the students in their building. The purpose of the team is to brainstorm new ideas and intervention strategies to propose to the teachers to help solve problems with at-risk students. The team provides support and assistance to teachers as they help students learn more effectively and efficiently. When a student is identified to be “at risk”, the building administrator shall, with the assistance of appropriate personnel, intervene whenever possible in an effort to help that student with his/her problem(s) and minimize the risk of failure.

## What does a BIT or BART do?

The BIT/BART provides support, upon request, to classroom teachers working with students who have academic difficulties. These difficulties may be behavioral, emotional, social, or educational.

The assistance the BIT/BART gives can be

- ✓ Crisis intervention
- ✓ Screening
- ✓ Technical assistance
- ✓ Referral for special education evaluation
- ✓ Referral to an agency outside the school

The BIT/BART gives teachers immediate assistance for dealing with academic and behavioral problems of students, especially to those who do not qualify for special education services. The building principal or chairperson schedules an initial team meeting in a reasonable amount of time after a referral is made. The team meets on an “as-needed” basis.

Students who are at risk may only need a few modifications or accommodations in order to be more successful and to reduce behavior problems in the classroom.

- An *accommodation* allows a student to complete the same assignment or test as other students, but with a change in timing, formatting, setting, scheduling, response, and/or presentation.
- A *modification* is an adjustment to an assignment or test that changes the standard or what the test or assignment is supposed to measure.

Sometimes a behavioral contract that defines for the student what behaviors are acceptable and which are unacceptable may be the most useful tool to modify a student’s conduct. Federal and State regulations require that efforts be made to help students become successful in the regular classroom before placing them in special services.

Some school staff members think that offering modifications will “weaken” the curriculum. This should not happen because modifications do not change the curriculum. The subject matter or curriculum remains the same. The modification may mean the subject matter might be changed to a lower level of understanding or difficulty. Modifications simply help to convey and test the information in ways that will meet the needs of students who are having problems.

Some people mistakenly think that modifications will correct the situation and resolve the problems immediately. The truth is that it may be several days or even several weeks before there is noticeable evidence that the interventions are helping the student.

## Who is on the BIT or BART and what steps are taken when the team meets?

The BIT members should include at least two certified regular education teachers, at least one of which is the student’s classroom teacher, the school principal, and other staff knowledgeable of at-risk programs and strategies.

- The regular teacher calls attention to the student with academic and/or behavior problems by making a referral to the BIT/BART.
- The BIT/BART meets with the regular teacher to pinpoint specific strengths and problems of the student.
- An intervention plan with specific goals and objectives is created for the student. Specific intervention strategies are selected for the student based on the strengths and problems of the student.
- With advisory assistance from the BIT/BART, the classroom teacher puts the intervention plan into action.
- The student's progress is monitored and documented by the teacher.
- If the student is successful with interventions for the regular education classroom, the intervention plan is continued with advisory support from the BIT/BART.
- If the student's needs cannot be met in the regular classroom with interventions, formal documentation of the student's learning and behavior performance is used to make a referral for a special education evaluation.
- If the student does not qualify for special education services, the student is referred back to the BIT/BART for follow up and possibly a new intervention plan or a plan under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

When a student exhibits unique behaviors or learning problems in the classroom, the teacher often has no place to turn for help other than to refer the student for an evaluation for special education services. A disadvantage of this response is that it usually does not provide immediate support to the student and the teacher. It often takes weeks to complete the evaluations necessary to determine if a student is eligible to receive special education and related services.

*However, a BIT referral does not necessarily involve testing to determine a student's need for intervention.* The reason for a referral may be

- **Academic concerns** (failure, drop in grades, excessive effort resulting in minimal progress, difficulties grasping or performing grade-level expectations, not on track to graduate)
- **Behavioral/emotional concerns** (crisis at school, negative attitude, chronic disruptive classroom behavior, withdrawal, emotional mood swings, poor peer relations)
- **Physical/health concerns** (broken bones, constant illness, too many absences, hospitalization)

Once a BIT/BART meeting is held and interventions are discussed, students may be identified as

- ❖ needing to be tested for suitable educational placement.
- ❖ having disabilities and recommended for suitable education placement.
- ❖ having mild disabilities but are not eligible for special services. They should be placed in regular classes with modifications or possibly with a plan under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.
- ❖ having no disabilities but are still in need of support.

Within the last two categories, the BIT can assist a classroom teacher in clarifying the nature of the student's learning and/or behavior problem and provide immediate and relevant support.

The BIT should design interventions based on all available information about the student. Such essential data would include

- ✓ vision and hearing screening results
- ✓ achievement test scores
- ✓ academic progress reports
- ✓ health history
- ✓ attendance history
- ✓ documentation of interventions or adjustments attempted

Interventions should be specific to assist staff in providing on-going support for the student of concern. Interventions appropriate to the student should be recommended by the team and documented. Examples of interventions may include:

1. Title I
2. behavioral contract
3. change of classes
4. counseling

Research has identified indicators (such as academic, behavioral/emotional, physical/health concerns) that help in the early identification of a student who has a higher possibility of becoming "at-risk". Research also says that early interventions are more successful and less costly than interventions during a period of crisis. *The most important purpose of the BIT/BART is to assist classroom teachers in supervising and directing students whose academic performance and/or behavior puts them in danger of failing to meet grade-level expectations.*

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